

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

14 November 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 14 November 1969

DDCI was in the chair.

Godfrey noted completion of a memorandum on "The Political Role of the Soviet Military Establishment" and commented that he will be giving it limited Black Book distribution.

D/ONE noted receipt of a letter from DIA Director General Bennett dated 10 November making the suggestion that some thought be given to incorporating into Estimates a list of those things which we do not know. D/ONE went on to note that they have the letter under advisement and are studying how best to respond to this suggestion.

DD/S noted that the estimates of demonstrators in town continue to hold as reaching 150,000 over the weekend. He noted that there were a couple of bomb scares at Interior and Archives and that therefore persons coming into this building with packages will be asked to reveal the contents of same by a security officer posted at each entrance rather than by our regular guards.

Carver noted that there is a new abrasive element on the streets of Saigon in the form of a genuine political issue. He described this


TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

element as being the aftermath of Thieu's economic decree, which has had the effect of giving Thieu's opposition a political issue. He complimented the Station on having forecast this matter some time ago.

Maury reported that Congressmen Donald Riegle of Michigan and Paul McCloskey of California are here today to be briefed by Carver.

Parrott for Bross noted that he will be seeing General Cushman later today on a NIRB problem connected with a possible misunderstanding on Froehlke's part of SIGINT cost data.

DDCI noted that he and John Clarke will be meeting with and briefing Charles Bowsher, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Financial Management, today.


L. K. White



Joseph Alsop

Missile Buildup by Soviets Exceeds Worst U.S. Fears

THERE IS much to be learned from a conversation between the chief scientist of the Defense Department, Dr. John Foster, and a scientific colleague who had previously served the department in a high capacity. It was at the time of the ABM fight, and the colleague was a vocal opponent of the ABM.

Foster asked him why he took this stand. The colleague replied, quite unscientifically, that the risk of nuclear weapons being used increased proportionately to the increase in numbers of nuclear weapons. Therefore, he said, the United States ought to take "another kind of risk—unilaterally ceasing to produce this kind of weapons, as a signal to the Soviets," who might then respond to the "signal" by stopping their own production.

Foster pointed out that no respectable Soviet expert in this country predicted any kind of response to such a "signal" except continued Soviet production of nuclear weapons. And Foster added the bleak question:

"So what if your 'risk' goes wrong?"

"Now, Johnnie," the reply came back, the Soviets can't run this country. There aren't enough of them. We'd just have a different kind of government, that's all."

That ended the conversation. Yet of course the view that risking "a different kind of government" is better than the risks inherent in a reasonable nuclear balance is intellectually respectable, providing all the risks are forthrightly defined. Its forthrightness, in fact, was what made the above-quoted conversation interesting.

What makes the conversa-

tion currently relevant is the frightening deterioration of the nuclear balance in favor of the Soviets. Earlier this year, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and Deputy Secretary David Packard were loudly mocked for warning Congress that the Soviet nuclear program seemed to be aimed for a "first-strike capability," yet they have now been proved a bit overoptimistic.

Before testifying, Laird and Packard had to choose between minimum, medium and maximum estimates of future development of Soviet nuclear missiles. The key estimate concerned the rate of deployment of the giant SS-9 missile, with its triple warhead. The SS-9's clearly designed for the sole purpose of destroying the Minuteman missiles that constitute the primary American deterrent.

In the interval, unhappily, SS-9 deployment has gone forward just a bit faster than the maximum rate envisioned by Laird and Packard; and there have also been two highly successful additional tests of the SS-9's triple warhead. Deployment of the SS-11 and SS-13 missiles, comparable to our Minuteman, has proceeded pace, too. Launchings of Yankee class submarines, comparable to our Polaris subs, have again exceeded past estimates by a little.

Projecting from these new facts, the Soviets should have enough SS-9s to take out our Minuteman deterrent by the end of 1973. They should also have enough Yankee-class missile submarines to take out our B-52 bases by that time. In addition, they will have a certain number, as yet not estimated, of a new missile with a range of about 3,000 miles, designed for launching at sea against U.S. targets from points beyond the range of the existing U.S. set-watch system. Their attack submarines, designed to destroy our Polaris submarines, in fact constitute the Soviets' only lag. These last are too slow and too noisy to do their job efficiently.

By the beginning of 1974, meanwhile, our ABM deployment will still be quite inadequate to protect any significant number of our Minuteman missiles. Unless something urgent is done about it, in short, the nuclear balance is going to tilt very sharply against this country. And the balance was 5 to 1 in our favor, please remember, at the time of the Cuban missile crisis.

That does not mean that by 1974 the Soviets will be ready to consider the first strike their program seems to be aimed for. But it certainly means that the Kremlin will begin to show quite new orders of boldness in all sorts of situations. The first increase of Kremlin boldness is indeed already visible, in the middle Eastern situation explored in the last report in this space.

So this is also a matter for the left wing intellectuals to weigh, unless they have made the open choice of the scientist above-quoted.

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